



NEWS RELEASE

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

National Agricultural Statistics Service • United States Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 1659 • Richmond, Virginia 23218-1659 • Phone (804) 771-2493

Internet: nass-va@nass.usda.gov • World Wide Web: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/va>

Contact: Steven Manheimer, State Statistician

Number: 2

Released: January 28, 2000

Agricultural Economic Surveys Will Measure Farm Financial Health

Today's farmers face uncertainty about their future ability to sustain business. Lower prices coupled with higher input costs, land values, and rent place economic strain on farmers—but how much? The Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service will give Virginia farmers the chance to answer that question by participating in the 1999 agricultural economic surveys.

These surveys, titled the 1999 Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey and the 1999 Agricultural Resource Management Study, provide vital statistics about the economic condition of production agriculture. Most importantly, they are used by members of the agricultural community and their legislators when making important decisions that impact the future of America's farmers and ranchers.

In 1999, U.S. farmers received nearly \$23 billion in direct government payments. This is \$10 billion more than in 1998 and nearly \$15 billion more than the average total annual payment from 1994 to 1997. Data from these agricultural economic surveys are used to determine the funding amounts for these direct payments and other Federal farm programs.

"Reliable, accurate descriptions of the current economic health of Virginia's farms is crucial," said Steven Manheimer, State Statistician of the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service, "especially when policymakers, farm organizations, analysts, local USDA agents, news media, farm suppliers, lenders, and others make decisions that affect growers."

Beginning February 2, 2000 and continuing through March, producers chosen to participate in the agricultural economic surveys will either receive a survey in the mail or be visited by an interviewer to complete the report at the farm operator's convenience.

Cooperating with the Virginia Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services